At the hour of the morning designated for the commencement of the play, the young men, having completed their dancing, appeared on the ground, each with ball-sticks in his hands, and in all other respects prepared for the play, which commenced, about nine o'clock, by the old men, the judges of the play, throwing up the ball, at the firing of a gun, exactly at the point half-way between the two byes, around which were stationed an equal number of players from each side, who instantly commenced the scuffle for the ball as it descended; each party endeavouring to catch it between their ball-sticks and to throw it through their own goal, which, when successfully done, counted one for the game. Around either bye, also, there were placed a numerous party of each side; the one endeavouring to force the ball through, and the other doing their utmost to resist and drive it back to their own side of the ground.

In the illustration here given, I have endeavoured to represent the play at the moment when the ball has been thrown, and is falling beyond the bye, where the players are assembling in a mass to meet it as it falls. The game is generally 100; and owing to the great difficulty of getting the ball home and passing it through their byes with so many to resist it, each of these struggles occupies some time for its decision, and consequently the game continues the most (and sometimes the whole) of the day, before it is decided; and each party at the number of 95 being allowed to "set the game" to a higher number, often adds much to its tedious length. Whenever the ball is passed through the byes of either party it is announced all over the ground by a simultaneous bark or yelp; and the ball is thrown "home" to the judges, who start it again from the centre, when similar successive struggles and excitements instantly ensue, allowing the players but one minute or so to rest.

In the play here represented, every player was dressed alike; i. e. divested of all dress except the girdle and the tail before described, and the devices which they had painted upon their naked limbs, beautifully diversified with white and red clay. In the midst of these almost inconceivable scuffles and struggles for the ball, when they are tripping, and throwing, and foiling each other in every possible manner, the women are occasionally seen taking an active part in the play, although they are not allowed to use the ball-stick, it being too sacred on that day even for their touch. Their mode of joining in the play, however, is this: each woman who has her goods at stake, and thereby a direct interest in the play, is permitted to use all the stimulant to the scene that lies in her power, in the only mode allowed her on the occasion. She goes to the woods, and having procured a bunch of whips of some two or three feet in length, which she ties together at the butt ends, and carries in her right hand, she adjusts her dress for running, so that she has the free use of her nether limbs; and the moment the ball is started, she sets off in the darting throng—yelling and screaming as she runs—following up her husband, who is in search of the ball; and at every moment in the day when she can overtake him, while she reminds him of the value of their goods that are at stake and of the importance of exerting every nerve to protect them, she lashes him over the naked shoulders, and often to that degree that the blood will be seen trickling down over his back, drawn in the *affectionate* hints thus given by his wife, lest he should forget to exert himself to the fullest extent, for the manly protection of their mutual interest, by desperately playing to save their property at stake.

The Indian communities in America are perhaps the last of all on earth in which a woman would undertake to beat her husband; but by the custom of all tribes, on the occasion of a ball-play, the women who have goods at stake, and whose husbands are engaged in the play, have the privilege allowed them of chastising their husbands as severely as they please, whenever they can overtake them, giving additional stimulant to their exertions, (whilst they are *led* on by a high ambition for fame and the world's goods,) by *driving* them on with the lash, which is dealt out without mercy, by the most cruel and unsparing hands.

By the same custom of the country, also, which gives the woman this privilege, she is protected; the husband who would resent superfluous blows on this occasion would be branded with perpetual disgrace; and when they come, his only way to avoid them is to rush forward for the ball, and effect his escape by playing the most desperate game. To this second stimulus in the play, which is continually upon the tracks of the players, and keeping them constantly in motion, may be in a great measure attributed that indescribable excitement and action which we witness in these scenes: and, from the fury-like manner in which the wife is often seen following up and flagellating her husband, one easily and naturally imagines (as probably is often the case) that the poor woman, who has this privilege but seldom in her life, may be making the most of it, as the means of settling up some old standing account between herself and her husband, which she has no other mode of liquidating, and to which he must quietly submit, unless he keeps out of her way.

Such I offer as a feeble description of this beautiful and exciting game; and merely further observe, that such are its fascinations amongst the various tribes, and so highly is it prized by them, that in each and every tribe, there are, as well as aspirants for fame in war and in the chase, those whose hearts throb only for the envied notoriety of being reputed the most distinguished ball-players in the tribe; and for that distinction, ready to hazard their lives as freely as in the vicissitudes of battle. The three portraits in Plate Nº 21, and which I have already described, were all of young men of this stamp, who seemed to be ambitious for little else than the reputation of being first of their tribes, in the game of ball: and the second figure in the plate is peculiarly a good illustration of the assertion here made. This young man, WEE-CHUSH-TA-DOO-TA (*The Red Man*), whose portrait I painted after he had played in a desperate game at the Falls of St. Anthony, reputed the most determined and successful player of the Sioux tribe, has, as I was informed by the chiefs, for several of the last games he has been engaged in, taken the most solemn oath, whilst entering upon the play, that he would not survive if his side were to be beaten; thus desperately resolving to leave the ground, exulting in victory, or to leave his lifeless body upon it, a sacrifice by his own hand and his own knife: and I have not a doubt of the certain execution of his stern resolve in such an event.